

Notes from May 5, 2009 Final Charrette

CLSR Board members present: Steve Wilson, Alison Kutz-Troutman, Mary Mullen, Lynn Torno & Marinus Van de Kamp. Also present were Jeff Young, Shannon Maris, Danny Stratten, & presenter Dave Christensen, and Jackie Lynch and Linda Stewart from the City.

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Dave Christensen

Steve spoke briefly about the first charrette and the small group meetings.

Alison thanked the folks who helped with the small group meetings:

Dan Stratten, Juliet Thompson, Robyn DuPre, Marinus Van de Kamp, Heather Kathandin, Chris Elder, Shannon Maris, Dave Zhang from Permaculture Bellingham, Dan Borman, Lee Laney, Mary Mullen, Debra Gear, Leslie Bryson & Katie Franks from Parks, Bill Sterling, John Schlick, Carolyn Gibbons, David Kaplan, Jeff Westcott, Chris Webb.

Shannon Maris read from a email she wrote after the second small group meeting, about her hopes and dreams for the future of the CLSR project, which included a calendar on her fridge of events at the Caretaker's House, cider pressing, zucchini bread contest, solar path lights coming on at dusk, a place for memories, for fun and for education.

Dave reviewed what has happened before, for the folks in the audience who were not there. He explained that we need to submit a site plan to the City, and that the point here is to make sure that that plan reflected the ideas that came out of the charettes and design meetings. Ideas included rain catchment, solar panels, how to use wet areas, where fire turnaround access will be, where "dump site" for materials will be located, where ADA access would be, maintaining historical integrity of building, as little parking and car access as possible, siting the greenhouse we'd eventually like to have, a central covered meeting area, sheds for tools, how to control the deer, including some kind of creative fence surrounding the gardens. Gardens would be developed in 1000 square foot blocks, to represent the size of a typical home lot. Focus was not on plants, but on site plan.

With regard to plans for the building, the focus was on maximum flexibility over time, to accommodate office space, classrooms, seed storage, etc. The plan will add a porch to the rear of the house if possible, keeping as much as possible to historic design.

The row of conifers will stay in place, although some of the trees may be limbed up to allow sunlight in. Gardens will be oriented to true North-South. There was talk of someday installing gate where the old one used to be. Retaining walls will be no higher than 24-36 inches. The natural gathering area behind the house would be retained, with maybe an outdoor oven.

Dave pointed out that the plan includes lots of changes to wet area. The plan is to build a level

curved swale from new ADA parking area to entrance of house for ADA access, so it will blend into landscape. The plan preserves the wet area to catch stormwater and clean it before it passes down to the creek. Hope to eventually add trails, including eventually a trail down to the creek.

Dave then moved to a drawing of a gate, which copies the architecture of the house, and has a windmill on top. He pointed out the plan for a fence streetside and around the gardens. The fence will have sculptures on posts, espaliers and other plants on the fence. There will be a central gathering area incorporating a 6x24 shed, with an attached open trellis with a canvas roof that can be rolled out for rain and pulled back for sun.

Catchment systems will be installed for house and all sheds and greenhouses.

Moving on to the drawings of the house, the plan is create one big 24x24 area on the main floor, which hopefully can be opened all the way up with just posts to support the main beam. A library is planned on the back wall. There is an ADA bathroom accessible from both the outside and the main room. The kitchen will stay as is, except it will be opened to main room so it can be used as a demonstration kitchen. In the basement, the hope is to have one composting and one regular toilet, and to remove all the small walls to open up a big space.

Dan Borman asked who will be presenting the plan to City. Steve told him that the CLSR board will.

Danny Stratten asked if we should leave the drive through in place for the site plan to the City. He is worried that if we get it approved with the road in place, we may not be allowed to change it later. Jackie Lynch recommended that we show both the immediate plan (which keeps the road in place) and the end goal plan (which mostly takes it out) to the City, to make sure the Fire Department is given notice of what our goal is.

Someone asked if there was any parking? The answer was that there is plenty of parking for now, but eventually we hope to have none other than the ADA spot. Dave asked how often trucks will need to get to house? Lynn said maybe often if a commercial kitchen goes in. Dave said that the City might allow us to use a pervious surface on the circular drive if it is used only occasionally, otherwise it will need to be impervious surface.

Patrice Clark asked whether there would be any bike racks in the site plan. Dave said they can be put anywhere.

Michael Chiavario asked whether the site plan will include all of the detail shown on the plans presented at the meeting. Dave said No, that the plan will show generally where the garden is, and list the outbuildings and other items we eventually hope to install, but that the focus of the site plan is on addressing the City's concerns for parking, ADA access, fire prevention, uses of the property, and similar issues. Dave pointed out that one of the most critical issues is whether the city is going to require CLSR to install a fire hydrant right off the bat (\$35,000 cost). Dave thought that we might be able to delay this expense if we limit the initial use of the building to office and storage space. Once it becomes more of a public space, we will need to pay for a

hydrant.

Lynn asked about water on the site. Jackie Lynch said there is a 6 inch line between Caretakers'House and Fairhaven Park.

Steve asked if we could show the main floor plan as Phase I, and ask what the maximum occupancy of the building would be, and see what City tells us. Dave said he could run those calculations, which he did. Using 7 square foot per person in a 24 x 24 square foot space, the maximum occupancy would be 35-37. We might be able to reduce that amount by pointing out that the occupancy for the bathroom, kitchen, and a corridor to the bathroom would be much less than 7 sq. ft. per person. Dave said he wouldn't expect more than 20-24 people at a time in the main room on main floor.

Dave recommended one more pre-application conference with the City to confirm fire requirements, and make sure the Fire Department will accept a one-way, back out situation. Jackie will set up the meeting. Dave said the City can be flexible if it is a historic building, but not under modern building rules.

Someone asked if there would be a gate denying access after hours. Dave said as now drawn it will be open outside the fenced garden area. The concern is that the garden and house may be subject to vandalism if it is open. Dave pointed out that we will have to undergo crime prevention review; Jackie said City will not like dark areas, prefers open access and visibility.

Danny Stratten asked if we would eventually have to develop a lighting plan for the site; Dave said probably. Dave said solar panels could probably power any required lights.

Danny said a question has come up about the spruce – apparently erosion has undermined the roots of 3 of the trees, and they are going to come down in a wind soon. They probably should be removed before that happens.

Danny said his main critique of plan is that we aren't using all of the land – particularly the triangle to the right of the driveway, where we could remove invasives and add productive garden. Dave pointed out that we don't have a firm commitment from the city yet as to what land will be included with the CLSR lease, and maybe we need to show them we can do a good job with the rest before we go after that triangle. Dan Borman said he has hopes for a First People's garden in that area.

Someone asked about roof replacement, what material would be used. Dave said the materials will have to be historically consistent, but can be modern materials to help with maintenance. Someone asked if a silver metal standing seamed roof would pass historic review, and both Dave and Jackie said no. Someone said there are metal shingles that look like shake, but they are very expensive.

Shannon said that it is possible to do solar at 15 degree angle to the sun; Dave disagreed, saying that it has to be a steeper angle at this altitude. Someone else asked about doing some kind of

grid system to maximize power production during summer months. Danny said we could do ground-mounted adjustable solar panels, which could be moved with the seasons.

Danny asked if we could use the creek for hydro power; Dave indicated that it would be a laborious process getting the necessary permits.

A show of hands was asked for the approval of the plan. Plan was overwhelmingly approved. Steve thanked Dave, who received warm applause from everyone attending.

Dan Borman asked if someone had a list of what we have to do next. Dan asked if we could put the list in written form.

Dave passed this question to Steve, who said our next requirement is to get site plan approved. Jackie Lynch elaborated, saying that (1) Steve and Marinus should sit down and go over occupancy and turnaround and other important things that will cause costs to change, and (2) talk to Parks to schedule City Council committee meeting to do a presentation to start the process for council approval.

Steve then pointed out that once we get the site plan approved, we have to raise the money to make these dreams come true. We're getting lots of offers for help, and we'll try to fit people in wherever we can. Our most important task right now is to head out into community to do fundraising. Alison also mentioned spreading the word about the website and helping with auction donations for the Sept. 12 auction, and asked for any contacts anyone has with good fundraisers.

Dave recommended sending a press release with photo or other art.

Someone recommended a sign on the site, and Alison told him about the plan to have Leslie Rogers and her dad make one.

Eric from Fairhaven College has offered to put on a benefit concert for CLSR.

Dave said to look for odd grants, there are lots out there.

Linda Stewart congratulated the leadership of project on how much progress had been made and thanked Dave for his help, and said there is lots of support for the project at City Hall.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30.